Ban on non-iodised salts

590. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have imposed a ban on the sale of non-iodised salt in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the difference in the cost of iodised and non-iodised salt for the consumer;

(d) the names of companies which are marketing iodised salt in the country;

(e) whether a large number of people are against this ban on non-iodised salt; and

(f) if so, whether Government propose to review this decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) The Government of India has taken a decision to restrict the sale of edible common salt for direct human consumption unless it is iodized. However, it may be sold for iodization, iron fortification, animal use, preservation, manufacturing medicines and industrial use under proper label declaration.

The Government has under the PFA Rules 1955, issued a draft notification GSR 340(E) dated 27.5.2005 for this purpose and for inviting objections/suggestions.

(c) For the same variety, quality and packaging the difference in the cost of iodized salt and non-iodized salt is marginal, because the cost of iodization is only approx. 10 paise per Kg and thus its percentage contribution to the retail price is negligible.

(d) There are at present 799 Salt Iodization Units including 43 refineries registered with Salt Department engaged in the production and marketing of iodized salt in the country.

(e) Some people are against the ban on sale of non-iodized salt for direct human consumption without furnishing scientific evidence on the

harmful effects of iodisation of salt. However, the Government decision which is based on the outcome of a National Survey is supported by scientist and experts as well as the World Health Organization and UNICEF as a measure to safeguard public health and to prevent and control mental and physical retardation and lowered IQ in growing children. At present, 92 countries in the world are implementing Salt Iodization Programmes for control and prevention of Iodine Deficiency Disorders.

(f) No, Sir.

Awareness programme to control HIV/AIDS

591. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that NACO has started Red Ribbon Express as part of its awareness programme to control HIV/AIDS in India;

(b) if so, what are the aims and objectives of the programme; and

(c) the route map of this awareness campaign?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRIMATI PANABAKA LAKSHMI): (a) and (b) The government has decided to start 4 special trains namely "Red Ribbon Expresses" from four different directions i.e. from Jammu (J&K), Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu) and Tinsukia (Assam), with an aim to generate awareness on HIV/AIDS issues across the country. These special trains will move on different routes and cover a distance of approx. 6,000 kms each and hold variety of awareness programmes in over 29000 villages/urban areas. Each train would run for 6 months and finally reach Nagpur to conclude the journey. The objectives of running the Red Ribbon Express are:—

- To involve a large cross section of youth for health and HIV/AIDS awareness and orient them to work on community health issues with special reference to HIV/AIDS;
- To coordinate among various agencies working for development, health and prevention of HIV/AIDS; and
- To involve local governance institutions, especially Panchayati Raj Institutions & Municipal Corporation in AIDS control initiatives.

(c) Tentative route chart is enclosed at Statement.